A1 Canon B2 Panasonic C1 Canon C6 Nikon C7 Sony

Ratings Advanced cameras

In performance order, within types. (Types designated A, B, etc.)

☑ CR Best Buy
☑ Recommended

● Excellent ◒ Very good ○ Good ◖ Fair ● Poor

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Lens included	Price	Overall score (0–100, P|F|G|VG|E)	Megapixels	Weight (oz.)	Test lens	Battery life (shots)	Image stabilizer	LCD size (in.)
A POINT-AND-SHOOT For those who want a built-in lens but advanced features similar to those on an SLR.											
✔	1	Canon PowerShot G11	•	$ 500	65	10	15	28-140mm	390	L	2.8
	2	Casio Exilim EX-FH100	•	350	57	10	8	24-240mm	520	B	3.0
B SLR-LIKE For those who want a smaller, lighter camera with a detachable lens.											
	1	Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH1K	•	1,250	71	12	33	14-140mm (2.0)	300	B	3.0
✔	2	Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF1K	•	800	67	12	20	14-45mm (2.0)	350	B	3.0
	3	Ricoh GXR	•	830	63	10	15	24-72mm	410	B	3.0
	4	Olympus PEN E-P2	•	1,100	60	12	21	14-42mm (2.0)	300	B	3.0
	5	Samsung NX10	•	700	60	14	23	18-55mm (1.5)	400	L	3.0
C SLR For those who want advanced features and performance, with a detachable lens and through-the-lens viewfinder.											
✔	1	Canon EOS 7D Digital	•	1,800	73	18	50	18-135mm (1.6)	800	L	3.0
✔	2	Canon EOS Rebel T2i	•	900	71	18	28	18-55mm (1.6)	470	L	3.0
✔	3	Canon EOS Rebel T1i	•	800 _550•_	70	15	28	18-55mm (1.6)	400	L	3.0
	4	Nikon D300s	•	2,150	69	12	52	16-85mm (1.5)	950	L	3.0
	5	Pentax K-7	•	1,000	68	15	36	18-55mm (1.5)	740	B	3.0
✔	6	Nikon D5000 _570•_	•	700	67	12	33	18-55mm (1.5)	510	L	3.0
✔	7	Sony DSLR-A330	•	550	64	10	28	18-55mm (1.5)	510	B	2.7
	8	Sony DSLR-A550	•	950	64	14	33	18-55mm (1.5)	950	B	3.0
✔	9	Pentax K-x	•	600	63	12	31	18-55mm (1.5)	420	B	2.7
	10	Sony DSLR-A380	•	700	63	14	28	18-55mm (1.5)	510	B	3.0
	11	Sony DSLR-A500	•	750	63	12	33	18-55mm (1.5)	520	B	2.7
	12	Olympus E-620	•	700	60	12	28	14-42mm (2.0)	500	B	2.7
	13	Nikon D3000	•	500	60	10	30	18-55mm (1.5)	550	L	3.0

Specifications test-results columns (Regular photos, Low-light photos, Flash photos, Video quality, Response time, Handling shake, Image stabilizer, Controls, Versatility, LCD quality, Live view) are rated with the circle symbols shown in the key. Image stabilizer type is shown as lens-based (L) or body-based (B); NA = not applicable.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is based mainly on image quality, ease of use, versatility, LCD panel quality, and flash and video quality. **Megapixels** is the number of pixels, in millions, on the sensor. **Weight** is with battery, memory card, and strap. **Test lens** is the kit lens tested. To calculate its 35-mm-equivalent focal range, multiply the minimum and maximum settings shown, respectively, by the magnification factor, where shown in parenthesis. **Battery life** is as the manufacturer states (without Live View enabled). **Regular photos** reflects the quality of a series of handheld shots, using natural light and flash, taken indoors and outdoors under a range of light conditions. **Low-light photos** tests the quality of shots taken in low-light conditions. **Flash photos** tests the quality of the built-in flash's light output and evenness of illumination. **Video quality** mostly reflects footage shot in regular and low light, with audio quality and macro (close-up) capability also considered. **Response time** is an overall speed judgment, including start-up time and the shutter delay for the first and later shots. **Handling shake** reflects how well blur, distortion, and color defects are avoided with handheld shots. **Image stabilizer** shows the type used, lens-based (L) or body-based (B). **Controls** is a general assessment of basic operation. **Versatility** assesses controls, features, menus, and the degree to which you can adjust settings, such as exposure compensation. **LCD quality** is a judgment of images viewed under a number of lighting conditions. **Live view** lets you compose directly on the LCD, as you would on a basic camera. **LCD size** is measured diagonally.

Overview

Most models are fine overall performers. Differences between SLR and SLR-like models are mainly in body construction (SLR-likes don't have through-the-lens viewfinders) and the complexity and versatility of controls. Tests for advanced cameras are performed using the lens listed in the test-lens column, usually the kit lens sold with the body, and photo judgments are scored to a higher standard, meaning they can't be directly compared with the basic-camera photo scores on page 50. To calculate the zoom range (such as 3x) of a listed test lens, divide its maximum focal length (shown) by the corresponding minimum.

☑ CR Best Buy

These models offer the best combination of performance and price. All are recommended.

☑ Recommended

These are models that stand out for the reasons below.

For advanced features in a compact size:
A1 Canon $500

This point-and-shoot matched most of the SLRs for regular and flash shots yet is much smaller and lighter. It supports RAW files, has a swiveling LCD, and accepts an external flash. But video quality didn't match most video-capable SLRs and SLR-likes, and it can't zoom while capturing video.

Best value in a smaller, SLR-like model:
B2 Panasonic $800

This rivals most of the SLRs for performance and price but is smaller and weighs about two-thirds as much. But there aren't as many compatible lenses as with most SLRs. It costs less than B1 and yielded better regular photos than either B1 or B3.

Best values if you want SLR flexibility:
C2 Canon $900
C3 Canon $800
C6 Nikon $700 **CR Best Buy**
C7 Sony $550 **CR Best Buy**
C9 Pentax $600 **CR Best Buy**

C2 and **C3** are the most consistent performers of the group, if also among the most expensive. **C6** has a swiveling display. **C7** offers fast response and robust shake handling but lacks video capability. **C9** has video and costs about the same.

For standout SLR performance:
C1 Canon $1,800

The Canon is much heavier and pricier than most other SLRs, but it offers the best combination of superb photos, fast response, and sure shake handling. It also comes bundled with a more powerful lens, has a weatherproof camera body, and can fire off eight still images per second.

TRADE-OFF Subcompacts such as the Canon PowerShot SD1400 IS Elph are very portable. But because they are small, buttons on the back and top are too tiny for all but the smallest fingers.

Can't find a viewfinder? Here's why

Almost three-quarters of subscribers we surveyed last year who had a viewfinder on their camera said they found it useful. More than half of basic-camera owners wanted one in their next camera. That's understandable because a viewfinder lets you compose a shot even if sunlight washes out your camera's LCD.
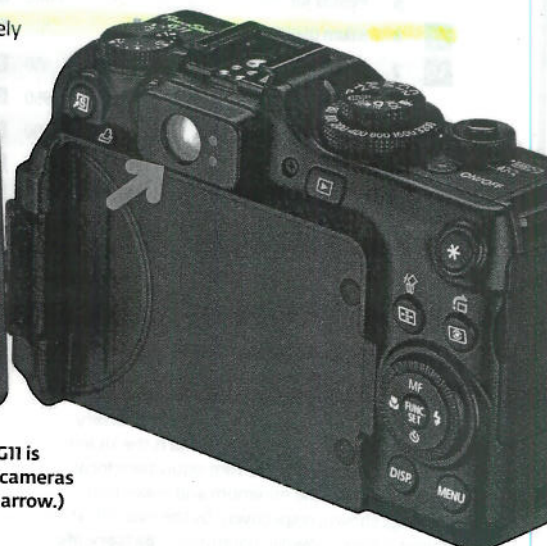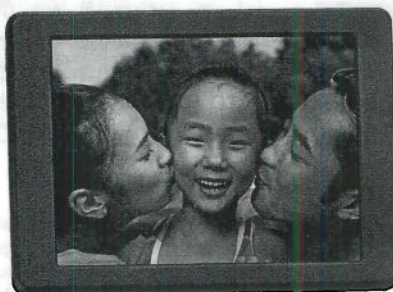
So why can't you find one on most point-and-shoots? Manufacturers we spoke with, citing their own market research, offered several reasons:
• Consumers want ever-smaller cameras, they claim, with larger LCDs.
• With larger LCDs, there's no room left on the camera body for an optical viewfinder. Our engineers agree with that claim. Some LCDs dominate the entire back of subcompacts, forcing such models to rely on touch-screen displays for controls.
• More subcompacts have lenses with

greater optical zoom, as much as 12x or 14x, making it difficult to build an accurate optical viewfinder.

Camera makers also said that newer LCDs have sharper images, antiglare glass to limit reflections, and improved contrast, backlighting, and viewing angle, all of which help in bright light. But we found the LCDs on most basic models in the Ratings difficult to view in bright light.

If you prefer a point-and-shoot with an optical viewfinder, several models have one, although most are 2009 models and might be difficult to find. They include the Canon PowerShot SD780 IS Elph, Canon PowerShot G11, which is in our advanced camera Ratings, and Nikon Coolpix P6000.

RARITY The Canon PowerShot G11 is one of the few point-and-shoot cameras with an optical viewfinder. (See arrow.)